
DEPARTMENT POLICY

State Emergency Relief (SER) assists individuals and families to resolve or prevent homelessness by providing money for rent, security deposits, and moving expenses.

Households facing an immediate crisis may also be assisted by the county's Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA). Please visit the following website for referral information, <http://michigan.gov/mshda/0,4641,7-141-5515---,00.html>

COVERED SERVICES

Accept the decision of the SER group regarding use of the relocation funds authorized. The issuance amount must resolve the group's shelter emergency. Authorize any combination of the following services:

- First month's rent.
- Rent arrearage.
 - Mobile home lot rent for owners or purchasers is a Home ownership service found in ERM 304.
 - Mobile home lot rent for renters is a relocation service covered by this Item.
- Security deposit (if required).
- Moving expenses (to relocate household effects).

Example: Group A decides to use their entire relocation services amount for a rent arrearage; Group B wants to use their relocation services amount for the first month's rent on a new apartment; Group C requests first month's rent and rental of a U-Haul trailer. Process payments for these situations as requested.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Authorize relocation services only if one of the following circumstances exists and all other SER criteria are met.

- The SER group is homeless. The definition of homelessness for SER means that there is no housing that the group can return to. To be considered homeless, the SER group must

meet one of the following criteria: Has a primary night-time residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation, (the group is sleeping in a car or on the streets).

- Has a primary night-time residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation, (the group is sleeping in a car or on the streets).
 - Is living in an emergency shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
 - Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
 - The SER group is at risk of homelessness
- Note:** Groups who voluntarily left their home, but can return without a threat to their health or safety, are not homeless.
- The SER group meets the eligibility requirements for one of the following homeless assistance programs:
 - Family Re-Housing Program (replaces Rapid Re-Housing Initiative which ended 5/31/2015) effective 10/1/2015.
 - Rural Homeless Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative (RPSH).

Note: Update the Living Arrangement screen in Bridges to reflect the appropriate homeless assistance program.

Group Living With Friends or Relatives

A group living with friends or relatives is not homeless, even if the arrangement is temporary unless one of the situations below exists:

- The group is living temporarily with other persons following a fire or natural disaster that occurred not more than 60 days before the date the group files an application for SER.

- The group is living with other persons to escape a domestic violence situation.
- The group meets eligibility criteria for one of the homeless assistance programs listed above.

DOCUMENTATION OF NEED

Persons who are homeless; living in an emergency shelter, on the street, in a car or place unfit for human habitation must provide a written observation by an outreach worker, written referral by another service provider, or a written statement from the head of household stating that the SER group is living on the streets. Verification from an outreach worker or service provider must be on official letterhead, signed and dated.

Persons eligible for one of the homeless assistance programs listed above must have a written referral by the service provider verifying that the SER group is eligible for the program. The verification must be on agency letterhead with the homeless assistance program identified, signed and dated.

Persons at imminent risk of homelessness must provide a court summons, order or judgment resulting from an eviction action.

Legal Notice

A court summons, order, or judgment was issued which will result in the SER group becoming homeless.

Foster Care

The SER group needs adequate housing to avoid a foster care placement or before a child or children can come home from foster care.

Unsafe Housing

A MDHHS services worker or MDHHS specialist, with supervisory approval, determines the family must be relocated from unsafe housing for the protection of the children.

**Condemned
Housing**

The SER group receives final written notice to vacate condemned housing from a local public agency authorized to issue such an order.

High Energy

The energy multi-disciplinary team has identified the group as living in high energy housing that cannot be rehabilitated.

**HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY**

Bridges will determine whether the SER group's rental housing is affordable. Approve SER for relocation services only if the group's rental obligation meets the criteria for housing affordability specified in ERM 207.

**REQUIRED
PAYMENTS**

Verify the group shelter payments for the past six months and enter the obligation amount and verification source on the SER Required Payments screen. If required payments have not been made, Bridges will determine whether the SER group had good cause for non-payment of their shelter obligation during the last six months, regardless of the reason they are in need; see ERM 204.

Example: A group in a homeless shelter or homeless due to a fire must have met required payments.

Note: In cases where the group is residing in a homeless shelter, and there are extenuating circumstances, an exception request may be made through Bridges to Energy and Emergency Services. See ERM 104, Exceptions to Official SER Policy.

**SHELTER
VERIFICATION**

Before relocation services can be approved for families with children under the age of six, a DHS-3688, Shelter Verification form, with a revision date of October 2009 or later, is required to verify that the home is free of lead paint or is certified lead safe.

The shelter provider is required to complete and sign the DHS-3688. If the shelter unit is not lead-paint safe, payment for relocation services for that residence may not be approved.

The signed DHS-3688 is only required when a family, with a child under the age of six, has requested relocation services to move into a new residence. An updated form is not required for relocation services (rent to prevent eviction) for the current residence.

PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION

Bridges will authorize the amount the SER group needs to keep or obtain permanent shelter, up to the amounts in the Issuance Maximums for Relocation Services at the end of this item.

Note: Do not authorize SER for relocation if the address of the rental unit appears on the vendor payment restricted addresses list maintained in the local office.

VERIFICATION SOURCES

Verification of Need Amount

- A DHS-3688, Shelter Verification form with a revision date of October 2009 or later must be completed and signed by the shelter provider.
- Written statement from the shelter provider, signed and dated.
- Order of judgment.
- Obtain a statement from the rental or moving company to verify the cost of moving the household belongings.

Shelter Costs

- DHS-3688, Shelter Verification form, signed and dated.
- Written statement from the shelter provider.

Homelessness

- Eviction, judgment, or court order from last residence.

Note: A demand for possession non-payment of rent or notice to quit is not acceptable.

- Group's statement that they are living with others to escape domestic violence.
- Group's statement that they are sleeping in a car, or on the street and there is no housing they can return to.
- Fire department report, newspaper article, etc. verifying a fire or natural disaster.
- Statement from the releasing facility for persons exiting jail, prison, a juvenile facility, a hospital, a medical setting, foster care, a substance abuse facility or a mental health treatment setting indicating there is no available housing and the person has no residence to return to.
- Signed and dated statement on official letterhead of the agency or service provider, which identifies the persons and the homeless assistance program they are eligible for.

Potentially Homeless

- An eviction order or court summons regarding eviction. (A demand for possession non-payment of rent or a notice to quit is not sufficient.)
- Legal notice from local public agency ordering the group to vacate condemned housing.

Note: A non-compliance notice with building code violations or condemnation notice granting a repair period does not qualify as a notice to vacate.

- Written statement from MDHHS services worker or MDHHS specialist, approved by a manager, when:
 - The current rental unit is unsafe structurally or is otherwise a threat to the health and safety of the family.
 - The family needs adequate, affordable housing to avoid a foster care placement or so children in foster care can return home.
- Written notification from the energy multi-disciplinary team that the group lives in high energy housing that cannot be rehabilitated.

Required Payments

- Rent receipts.
- Statement from the landlord.

TABLE - ISSUANCE MAXIMUMS FOR RELOCATION SERVICES

ISSUANCE MAXIMUMS FOR RELOCATION SERVICES	
SER Group Size	Relocation Services Maximums Payment Per Issuance
1	\$410
2	\$520
3	\$620
4	\$740
5	\$870
6 or more	\$1,040
Note: The amounts shown in the table are not monthly issuance amounts. They are the total maximum issuance amounts per SER group. Example: A group of 6 persons with a 3-month rent arrearage would receive a maximum of \$1,040 for a relocation service.	

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.